



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR MILWAUKEE/WOW COUNTIES  
MILWAUKEE, WASHINGTON, OZAUKEE AND WAUKESHA COUNTIES

February 2004

## Unemployment Rates are Lower Compared to Last January

**Milwaukee County's** unemployment rate increased over the month by eight-tenths of a percentage point to 6.7 percent in January. Annually, the rate is lower than January 2003's rate of 7.4 percent. Milwaukee County's labor force shows 7,200 more employed and over 3,000 fewer unemployed compared to last January.

ment rate increased over the month by one percent point to 5.4 percent. The current rate is lower than last January's by nine-tenths of a percentage point. Washington shows over 1,000 more employed residents and 600 fewer unemployed.

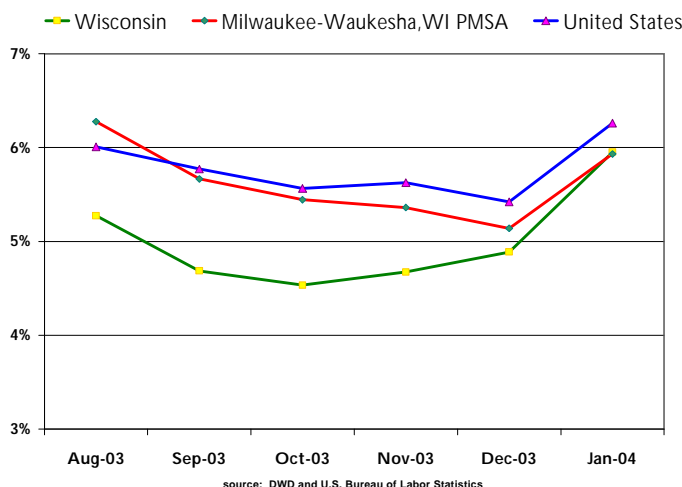
January's labor force figures for **Ozaukee County** show an increase in the unemployment rate of

seven-tenths of a percent point to 4.4 percent. Ozaukee County has the lowest unemployment rate in the metro area. It also showed the lowest annual decrease in unemployment rate compared to last January, one-tenth of a point lower.

**Waukesha County's** unemployment rate increased over the month to 4.7 percent. This monthly change is a seasonal increase of eight-tenths of a percentage point. Like the majority of Wisconsin's counties, the rate is lower than it was at this time last year; four-tenths of a percent point lower than last January.

The **Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA** not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in January was 5.9 percent. January's rate is an increase of eight-tenths of a percentage point compared to December, but is lower than last January's by seven-tenths of a percentage point. The monthly changes in the labor force, such as the increase in the number of unemployed (+6,800) and the decrease in employed (-2,000), are seasonal in nature. But interesting

### Six-Month Unemployment Rate Watch



### Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Southeast Wisconsin counties: January 2004

	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA			Milwaukee County		
	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03
Labor force	3,086,003	3,065,115	3,025,810	822,326	817,584	814,612	485,442	482,643	481,263
Employed	2,902,336	2,915,293	2,823,602	773,542	775,560	761,252	452,752	453,933	445,559
Unemployed	183,667	149,822	202,208	48,784	42,024	53,360	32,690	28,710	35,704
% Unemployed	6.0%	4.9%	6.7%	5.9%	5.1%	6.6%	6.7%	5.9%	7.4%
	Washington County			Ozaukee County			Waukesha County		
	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03	Jan-04	Dec-03	Jan-03
Labor force	70,259	69,692	69,823	48,907	48,690	48,186	217,718	216,559	215,342
Employed	66,456	66,629	65,400	46,747	46,869	46,005	207,587	208,129	204,289
Unemployed	3,803	3,063	4,423	2,160	1,821	2,181	10,131	8,430	11,053
% Unemployed	5.4%	4.4%	6.3%	4.4%	3.7%	4.5%	4.7%	3.9%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Figures are not seasonally adjusted and current month's data are preliminary

## Industry Employment Estimates for the Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA: January 2004

Place of Work Employment in 1,000's	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA		
	Jan-04	Diff. since Dec-2003	Diff. since Jan-2003	Jan-04	Diff. since Dec-2003	Diff. since Jan-2003
All Industries	2,741.1	-52.8	30.6	816.5	-17.6	-3.5
Construction/Natural Resources	116.1	-9.4	4.3	28.1	-3.1	-2.2
Manufacturing	497.5	-3.9	-11.8	133.4	-0.6	-5.4
Retail Trade	327.1	-6.4	12.9	82.7	-1.9	0.4
Wholesale Trade	112.6	-0.5	1.3	40.1	0.1	0.1
Transport/Warehouse/Utilities	104.4	-3.8	1.6	30.8	-0.4	0.8
Financial Activities	159.8	-0.3	5.5	62.2	0.4	4.4
Education and Health Services	371.7	-2.2	11.9	131.7	-2.9	5.9
Leisure and Hospitality	233.5	-3.5	7.9	62.3	-0.9	1.4
Info./Prof./Bus. and Other Services	417.9	-5.4	0.8	156.8	-3.0	-3.9
Information	49.2	-0.3	-1.5	19.2	0.0	0.4
Professional and Business Services	241.6	-2.7	6.7	98.4	-1.8	-2.5
Other Services	127.1	-2.4	-4.4	39.2	-1.2	-1.8
Fed/State/Local Government	400.5	-17.4	-3.8	88.4	-5.3	-5.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Current Employment Statistics. Figures are rounded and may not sum to total. Current month's figures are preliminary

is the fact that the change from December 2003 to January 2004 seemed less volatile compared to past changes that averaged 10,000 fewer employed and 6,600 more unemployed between December and January from 1993 to 2003. January seemed a bit more subdued than usual in the area's labor force. The fact that the unemployment rate has decreased compared to last January is good news as it showed 12,300 more employed and almost 4,600 fewer unemployed.

As January's labor force statistics show a monthly decrease in the number of employed residents, so did total industry employment as most of the area's industry supersectors show at least a modicum of employment loss since December. The **Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA** industry employment figures for January totaled 816,500 jobs, which is a decrease of 17,600 jobs since December. The decreased number of jobs is fairly typical for the December to January change, which over the last decade usually displayed a decline in the number of jobs totaling anywhere from 17,000 to 26,000 jobs.

Two sectors, wholesale trade and financial activities increased in December by

100 and 400 jobs, respectively. The information sector remained unchanged over the month at 19,200 jobs.

Retail trade is typically one of the more salient sectors when examining industry employment change from December to January. This is due to the sector's build up of holiday employment in the fall and then the abrupt decline in post-holiday January. Current data, which also examines revised 2003 industry estimates, shows that retail trade employment was much more active than previously thought in the metro area in the fall of 2003. The unrevised estimates had shown a bit of sluggishness in retail trade hiring. The current January estimates show a monthly decline in retail trade employment of 1,900 jobs, which is a bit low in reduction than has normally been seen in this month to month change. In fact, current estimates show retail trade to be at a level just shy of the November 2003 estimate, which itself is a heightened month of this sector's employment. Retail trade employment will likely moderate a bit in the next couple of months with another spike upwards in the warmer months.

Government employment showed the

largest monthly loss of employment down 5,300 jobs over the month. Most of this was tied to school district payrolls, which were lower due to the holiday break.

Annually, the metro area shows an overall decline of 3,500 jobs. Education and health services showed the largest sector increase of 5,900 jobs, most of this being tied to the health services portion of the sector. Despite the overall reduction of total industry employment, growth was seen in financial activities, transportation, warehousing and utilities, wholesale and retail trade, leisure and hospitality, and information employment combining for 7,500 more jobs compared to last January. Manufacturing shows an annual decrease of 5,400 jobs.

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